

Appendix B

Appendix B - Scoping Process

Scoping Document (May 18, 2001)

- Notice of Intent to Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement

- Annotated Schedule and Milestones

- Crosswalk of Management Measures in the Alternatives

- Issues to evaluate associated with implementing Steller sea lion protection measures

- Template for submitting scoping comments (optional)

Tribal Governments

- Letter to Tribal Governments (June 4, 2001)

- Mailing List used to send Letters to Tribal Governments

Written Comment Letters Received During Scoping

- National Environmental Trust WorldWildlife Fund (June 22, 2001)

Appendix B: Scoping Process

Scoping, one of the early activities when conducting an environmental assessment, is designed to provide an opportunity for the public, agencies, and other interest groups to provide input on potential issues associated with the proposed project. Scoping is used to identify the range of environmental issues related to the proposed project and can also identify alternatives to meet the purpose and need of the action considered in the SEIS. Scoping is generally accomplished through written communications, statements at public meetings, or formal and informal consultation with agency officials, interested individuals, organizations, and groups. In this case, scoping was conducted in conjunction with other meetings held by the Council, and the Council's advisory committees: Scientific and Statistical Committee, Advisory Panel, and the Council's RPA Committee. Meetings occurred in Juneau, Kodiak, and Anchorage, Alaska and in Seattle, Washington, in December 2000, January, February, March, April, May, and June 2001.

The formal scoping period for this SEIS opened with publication of the Notice of Intent (NOI) to produce a SEIS, published in the *Federal Register* on May 15, 2001 (66 FR 26828). In the NOI, comments were solicited on what issues should be addressed in this analysis and what alternatives meet the purpose and need, including a "no action" alternative. A Scoping Document (copy attached) containing the NOI, annotated schedule and milestone information, crosswalk of management measures in the alternatives, issues to evaluate associated with implementing the Steller sea lion protection measures, and a template for submitting comments was prepared and distributed broadly. Letters (copy attached) containing information about this analysis were also sent to a list of Tribal Governments in Alaska to draw their attention to it and solicit comments. Public comments were due to NMFS by June 22, 2001. All public comments received prior to and during the formal scoping period were considered by NMFS and used to identify the key environmental issues to be addressed. No replies to the letters to Tribal Governments in Alaska were received. One comment letter was received in response to the NOI. It is attached.

Issues and Areas of Concern Identified for Analysis

The various alternatives analyzed in this SEIS will have differing effects on several aspects of the human environment. During scoping, several issues and areas of concern with respect to the effects of the fishery management measures being applied were identified as important aspects of the human environment that should be analyzed in detail. Therefore, this analysis will pay special attention to the effects of the management measures on:

- Pollock, Pacific cod, and Atka mackerel stock status and biomass distribution;
- Temporal and spatial distribution of fishing effort;
- Prey availability for Steller sea lions;
- Areas of special concern for Steller sea lions;
- Other marine mammals;
- Seabirds;
- Bycatch of prohibited species;
- Incidental catch of other groundfish species;
- Essential fish habitat; and
- Socioeconomic impacts.

A bulletized list of issues identified is contained in the attached Scoping Document.